

Urge Use of Project Labor Agreements (PLAs) to Ensure Quality of Work and Employment for Hudson Valley Residents

■ **Washington, DC** - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) and Congressman John Hall (D-NY) today requested that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which oversees many federal construction projects, establish the use of Project Labor Agreements (PLAs) for major construction projects at the United States Military Academy (USMA) at West Point in New York. PLAs are agreements to use a certain percentage of locally-based labor. They would encourage greater partnerships between the USMA and local communities, ensure high quality workmanship on projects, and increase the likelihood that complex projects will be completed on time and within budget. "The use of Project Labor Agreements is something that has proven to be very effective at increasing the use of local workers, controlling project costs and creating more predictable timetables for a project's completion," said Hinchey. "Today, Congressman Hall and I requested that the Army Corps of Engineers use these types of agreements at West Point in light of the important economic benefits they would provide to our region. It is concerning when multi-million dollar capital projects here in the heart of the Hudson Valley go to workers from other states and regions of the country while highly-skilled tradespeople from our area could be used to ensure that these project are completed efficiently and in a quality manner."

"It is critical that these important, major construction projects go to local workers, and especially to local veterans," said Hall. "I urge the Army to abide by the spirit and letter of President Obama's executive order and work with the Hudson Valley Building and Construction Trade Council to ensure local representation on all future construction projects at the U.S. Military Academy." President Obama signed an Executive Order to promote the efficient administration and completion of federal construction projects through the use of PLAs. "It is the policy of the Federal Government to encourage executive agencies to consider requiring the use of project labor agreements in connection with large-scale construction projects in order to promote economy and efficiency in Federal procurement," noted the President. This Executive Order overturned a previous directive of the Bush administration precluding the use of such agreements for federal construction projects. While Obama's directive encourages the use of PLAs, it does not mandate their use. Hinchey and Hall are working to ensure that PLAs are used by the USMA. A March 2009 study published by School of Industrial Labor Relations at Cornell University concluded, "Project Labor Agreements make sense for public works projects because they promote a planned approach to labor relations, allow contractors to more accurately predict labor costs and schedule production timetables, reduce the risks of shoddy work and costly disruptions, and encourage greater efficiency and productivity." The full text of the letter from Hall and Hinchey to Lt. Gen. Robert Van Antwerp, Jr., Chief of Engineers for the US Army Corps of Engineers is appended below. June 21, 2010 Lt. Gen. Robert Van Antwerp, Jr. Chief of Engineers Headquarters, US Army Corps of Engineers 441 G. Street,

NWWashington, DC 20314-1000Dear General Van Antwerp:We are writing to request your assistance and consideration in establishing the use of Project Labor Agreements (PLAs) for major construction projects at the United States Military Academy (USMA) at West Point in New York.

As you know, last year President Obama signed Executive Order 13502, which reversed a previous Bush administration Executive Order, and encourages the use of PLAs for federal government construction projects. As several major construction projects are being planned and designed for West Point, I urge the Army Corps to use PLAs for upcoming construction projects. The use of PLAs is an important step towards fostering a more active partnership between the USMA and the local, civilian communities in our districts, where many members of the Academy's staff live. The use of PLAs for large construction projects has resulted in many benefits throughout the Hudson Valley when they have been used for large public projects. In addition to increasing the use of local workers, PLAs have also been effective in ensuring that projects are completed in a timely manner and within budget. Further, partnership agreements with the Hudson Valley Building Trades has helped to ensure the highest quality of work from our local tradesmen and tradeswomen. As members of the West Point Board of Visitors, we are deeply proud of the heritage and importance of the USMA at West Point. We are also confident that implementing President Obama's Executive Order and utilizing PLAs for upcoming construction projects would help ensure the highest quality of work at West Point and strengthen the relationship between the Academy and our local communities. Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Maurice D. Hinchey

John Hall